

A decorative blue floral border with intricate scrollwork and leaf patterns, framing the central text.

# **GUZ 34 Nahum**

*Bible Commentary:  
David Guzik TEV -  
XXXIV*

**David Guzik**

**David Guziks' Commentary On**  
**34 Nahum**  
**Biblical Text – TEV (Good News Bible)**

**Nah 1:1** This is a message about Nineveh, the account of a vision seen by Nahum, who was from Elkosh.

**God's Wrath Against Nineveh**

Nah 1:2 The LORD God tolerates no rivals; he punishes those who oppose him. In his anger he pays them back.

Nah 1:3 The LORD does not easily become angry, but he is powerful and never lets the guilty go unpunished. Where the LORD walks, storms arise; the clouds are the dust raised by his feet!

Nah 1:4 He commands the sea, and it dries up! He makes the rivers go dry. The fields of Bashan wither, Mount Carmel turns brown, and the flowers of Lebanon fade.

Nah 1:5 Mountains quake in the presence of the LORD; hills melt before him. The earth shakes when the LORD appears; the world and all its people tremble.

Nah 1:6 When he is angry, who can survive? Who can survive his terrible fury? He pours out his flaming anger; rocks crumble to dust before him.

Nah 1:7 The LORD is good; he protects his people in times of trouble; he takes care of those who turn to him.

Nah 1:8 Like a great rushing flood he completely destroys his enemies; he sends to their death those who oppose him.

Nah 1:9 What are you plotting against the LORD? He will destroy you. No one opposes him more than once.

Nah 1:10 Like tangled thorns and dry straw you drunkards will be burned up!

Nah 1:11 From you, Nineveh, there came someone full of wicked schemes, who plotted against the LORD.

Nah 1:12 This is what the LORD says to his people Israel: "Even though the Assyrians are strong and numerous, they will be destroyed and disappear. My people, I made you suffer, but I will not do it again.

Nah 1:13 I will now end Assyria's power over you and break the chains that bind you."

Nah 1:14 This is what the LORD has decreed about the Assyrians: "They will have no descendants to carry on their name. I will destroy the idols that are in the temples of their gods. I am preparing a grave for the Assyrians—they don't deserve to live!"

Nah 1:15 Look, a messenger is coming over the mountains with good news! He is on his way to announce the victory! People of Judah, celebrate your festivals and give God what you solemnly promised him. The wicked will never invade your land again. They have been totally destroyed!

## **Nahum 1:1-15**

### **Nahum 1 – Coming Judgment on Nineveh**

#### **A. The character of the God who brings judgment.**

##### *1. (1) The burden of Nahum.*

#### **The burden against Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.**

a. **The burden:** In the prophets, a **burden** is a heavy message of weighty importance, heavy in the sense that it produces sorrow or grief.

i. "*Massa* comes from the verb 'to lift up' (*nasa*), and so it can mean 'to carry' or 'to lift up the voice.' From the first meaning comes the translation 'burden,' or 'load'; and from the second meaning we get the translation 'oracle,' or 'utterance.'" (Wolf, in his

commentary on Isaiah). Grammatically, we may be able to say “oracle,” but since these are *heavy* oracles, we are justified in calling them *burdens*.

ii. “*Massa* not only signifies a *burden*, but also a thing *lifted up, pronounced, or proclaimed*; also a *message*. It is used by the prophets to signify the *revelation* which they have received from God to deliver to any particular people.” (Clarke)

b. **Against Nineveh:** The capital of the Assyrian Empire was Nineveh, the city that heard the preaching of Jonah a hundred years before and repented. Nahum’s call was to address a city that had slipped back into sin and was again ripe for judgment.

i. Among other things, the Prophecy of Nahum shows us that God not only deals with individuals as individuals, He also deals with nations as nations. “This is the prophecy which sets forth, more clearly than any other, the truth concerning the wrath of God, in its national application” (Morgan). Nations will be held to account by God.

ii. Nineveh was an ancient and famous city. It was founded by the first world dictator, Nimrod (Gen 10:11). “From Nineveh’s walls, temples, palaces, inscriptions, and reliefs, mute yet elaborate witness is given to a city that flourished up to its destruction in 612 B.C. Accordingly, the magnificent buildings, artistic designs, and water-supply projects of Nineveh have resulted in its being likened to ancient Versailles” (*Major Cities of the Biblical World*).

c. **The book of the vision:** This was more than a message communicated to Nahum in words or phrases from God. Because this was a **vision**, in some way Nahum *saw* it. When we see the vivid, descriptive way

Nahum writes we understand that **the book** records what he saw in his **vision**.

i. Isa 2:1 says: *The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.* Isaiah saw a word, and in some sense Nahum also did.

d. **Nahum the Elkoshite**: We don't know anything else about **Nahum** or the city of Elkosh. The name **Nahum** is an abbreviated form of the name *Nehemiah*, which means "Comfort of Yahweh." It may be that Elkosh was in the region of Galilee because the city of Capernaum (Mat 4:13, Mar 9:33, Joh 2:12) was named after **Nahum** (*Kephar-Nahum*, "City of Nahum").

i. We don't know exactly when Nahum gave this prophecy. He mentioned the destruction of the Egyptian city *No Amon* (Thebes) in Nah 3:8 and Thebes fell to the Assyrians in 663 B.C., so Nahum must have been written after that. Nineveh was destroyed 50 years after No Amon (612 B.C.).

ii. It is likely that Nahum was written during the height of Nineveh's power. "It was concerned with Nineveh, and was delivered almost certainly when she was at the height of her power" (Morgan).

2. (2-8) *The judgments of a merciful God.*

**God is jealous, and the LORD avenges;  
The LORD avenges and is furious.  
The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries,  
And He reserves *wrath* for His enemies;  
The LORD is slow to anger and great in power,  
And will not at all acquit *the wicked*.  
The LORD has His way  
In the whirlwind and in the storm,  
And the clouds are the dust of His feet.  
He rebukes the sea and makes it dry,**

**And dries up all the rivers.  
Bashan and Carmel wither,  
And the flower of Lebanon wilts.  
The mountains quake before Him,  
The hills melt, and the earth heaves at His presence,  
Yes, the world and all who dwell in it.  
Who can stand before His indignation?  
And who can endure the fierceness of His anger?  
His fury is poured out like fire,  
And the rocks are thrown down by Him.  
The LORD is good,  
A stronghold in the day of trouble;  
And He knows those who trust in Him.  
But with an overflowing flood  
He will make an utter end of its place,  
And darkness will pursue His enemies.**

a. **The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked:** Nahum began his prophecy by considering the *character* of the God who brings judgment.

- **God is jealous:** How can it be said that God is **jealous**? "God's jealousy is love in action. He refuses to share the human heart with any rival, not because He is selfish and wants us all for Himself, but because He knows that upon that loyalty to Him depends our very moral life... God is not jealous *of* us: He is jealous *for* us." (Redpath in *Law and Liberty*)

- **The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries:** Man needs to understand that he can't fight against God and hope to prevail. Everyone who sets themselves against God will end up receiving His **vengeance**.

- **The LORD is slow to anger:** God is far more patient than man. Though there is a time and place where He

does display His **anger**, it doesn't come quickly or randomly. "God's sword of justice is in its scabbard: not rusted in it – it can be easily withdrawn – but held there by that hand that presses it back into its sheath, crying, 'Sleep, O sword, sleep; for I will have mercy upon sinners, and will forgive their transgressions'" (Spurgeon).

- **And great in power:** Knowing God's power should make us *trust* in His help (because He is able to help) and to *fear* His judgment (knowing that He judges with **power**).

- **Will not at all acquit the wicked:** God is not like an unjust judge who simply lets the guilty go out of a false sense of compassion. We can't just hope that God will say, "All is forgiven" when anyone passes from this world to the next. Sin must be accounted for, because He **will not acquit the wicked**. Every sin will be paid for – either in hell or at the cross – but God **will not acquit the wicked**. "Never once has he pardoned an unpunished sin; not in all the years of the Most High, not in all the days of his right hand, has he once blotted out sin without punishment" (Spurgeon).

- **The LORD has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm:** God's power is so great that it controls the mightiest forces known to man. A huge **whirlwind** or **storm** is nothing to God, because He **has His way** in them.

- **His fury is poured out like fire:** When God is resisted long enough and rejected strongly enough, eventually His judgment comes. He is **slow to anger**, but when it does come **His fury is poured out like fire**. Understanding this should make man quick to repent and wary of presuming on God's patience.

- **The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble:** Those who love Him and trust Him see the goodness of God and find protection in His **stronghold** – which is the LORD Himself. “Remember that it is only a *day*; it is not a week, nor a month, and God will not permit the devil to add an extra hour to that day; it is a ‘day of trouble.’ There is an end to all our griefs” (Spurgeon).

- **He knows those who trust in Him:** Not only does He know them in the sense of identification, but also in the sense of *relationship*. **Trust** implies relationship, and God **knows those who trust in Him**. “Once more, dear friends, this word ‘know’ here means *loving communion*... God knows us; he knows our prayers and tears, he knows our wishes, he knows that we are not what we want to be, but he knows what we do desire to be. He knows our aspirations, our sighs, our groans, our secret longings, our own chastenings of spirit when we fail; he has entered into it all. He says, ‘Yes, dear child, I know all about you; I have been with you when you thought you were alone. I have read what you could not read, the secrets of your own heart that you could not decipher I have known them all, and I still know them’” (Spurgeon).

b. **The LORD is good:** It is vitally important for everyone to know this.

- God is good in His very being – it is His very *nature* to be good.
- God is good independently – no one must *help* Him be good.
- God is eternally and unchangeably good.
- God is good in each one of His Divine Persons.
- God is good in all His acts of grace.



- God is good in all His plans and purposes for our life.

c. **With an overflowing flood He will make an utter end of its place:** Taking into account the character of God, though He is **slow to anger** and **good**, He could not forever overlook the sin and rebellion of the Assyrians. Their end in judgment would come like **an overflowing flood**.

i. The **overflowing flood** was fulfilled both figuratively and literally. "According to secular accounts, during the final siege of Nineveh by a rebel army of Persians, Medes, Arabians, and Babylonians, unusually heavy rains caused the rivers to flood and to undermine the city's walls, which then collapsed... the invading armies entered the city through this breach in its defenses" (Boice).

ii. The **utter end of its place** was also literally fulfilled. "Not only were these people lost from history, even the city was lost until it was discovered by archaeologists, beginning in the 1840's" (Boice).

iii. "The author is not expressing some personal feeling of vindication over some hurt by the oppressor, nor even a nationalistic chauvinism that pagan nations must be punished. Rather, Yahweh is applying his universal standard against evil, no matter who is responsible." (Baker)

## **B. Nineveh destroyed, Judah delivered.**

*1. (9-11) The destruction of Nineveh.*

**What do you conspire against the LORD?**

**He will make an utter end of it.**

**Affliction will not rise up a second time.**

**For while tangled *like* thorns,**

**And while drunken *like* drunkards,**

**They shall be devoured like stubble fully dried.**

**From you comes forth one  
Who plots evil against the LORD,  
A wicked counselor.**

a. **He will make an utter end of it:** Nineveh was ripe for a devastating judgment. This was not a harsh chastening; this was utter destruction to come upon the city. The promise

**affliction will not rise up a second time** sounds encouraging, until we realize that it **will not rise up a second time** because the judgment will be so severe the *first time*.

b. **They shall be devoured like stubble fully dried:** The dry leftover stalks of grass were ready to be **devoured** by the smallest flame. This was how ripe Nineveh was for judgment, and how complete the fire of judgment would be when it comes.

2. (12-13) *The deliverance of Zion.*

**Thus says the LORD:**

**“Though *they* are safe, and likewise many,**

**Yet in this manner they will be cut down**

**When he passes through.**

**Though I have afflicted you,**

**I will afflict you no more;**

**For now I will break off his yoke from you,**

**And burst your bonds apart.”**

a. **Though they are safe:** The enemies of Zion looked mighty; they were **safe** and **many**. Yet they will be devastated by the judgment that the LORD promised.

b. **Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no more:** God’s people looked weak and **afflicted**; yet God promised that they would be strengthened and restored. The power of their oppressors would be broken (**I will break off his yoke from you**).

i. Could not the believer today, who is trapped or oppressed by sin, ask God to break the yoke of sin? It must be done with a complete willingness to *walk* in the freedom God gives, but only God can **break off** the power of the things that bind us.

*3. (14) The end of the wicked in Assyria.*

**The LORD has given a command concerning you:  
"Your name shall be perpetuated no longer.  
Out of the house of your gods  
I will cut off the carved image and the molded image.  
I will dig your grave,  
For you are vile."**

a. **Your name shall be perpetuated no longer:** The city of Nineveh was once instantly recognized as one of the great power cities of the world. God promised to bring this wicked city so low that they would lose their legacy and **name** among the nations.

b. **I will dig your grave, for you are vile:** In this vivid – almost extreme – imagery, God warned Nineveh of its coming judgment and destruction.

*4. (15) Blessing in Judah.*

**Behold, on the mountains  
The feet of him who brings good tidings,  
Who proclaims peace!  
O Judah, keep your appointed feasts,  
Perform your vows.  
For the wicked one shall no more pass through you;  
He is utterly cut off.**

a. **Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace!** The contrast between the fate of the godly and wicked was nothing but *good news* to Nahum and the people of God.

i. Isa 52:7 uses a similar expression, but Isaiah marvels at the *beauty* of the *feet of him who brings good news*. Nahum would certainly agree, because those who bring **good tidings** have beautiful feet; they partner with God for the salvation of men. The **feet** speak of activity, motion, and progress, and those who are active and moving in the work of preaching the gospel have *beautiful feet*.

ii. In Isaiah, the good news is the coming of the Messiah. In Nahum, the good news is the defeat of the enemies of God's people. Revelation 17, 18 describe the fall of Babylon, representing the world system and all of its support structure. Rev 18:9-19 shows how the kings and merchants of the earth mourned the fall of Babylon, but Rev 18:20 through 19:6 shows how heaven rejoiced over the fall of the world system. What was mourned on earth was applauded in heaven, and the same principle applies in Nahum's prophecy of Nineveh's fall.

iii. "Rejoicing is not in this context gleeful gloating at the misfortune of others... Rather it is pleasure at the vindication of God and his promises." (Baker)

b. **O Judah, keep your appointed feasts, perform your vows:** Knowing the grace and mercy of God to His people should not make the believer *careless* in obedience, it should make the believer more careful to obey every word of the LORD.

## **The Destruction of Nineveh**

**Nah 2:1** Nineveh, you are under attack! The power that will shatter you has come. Prepare the defenses! Guard the road! Prepare for battle!

Nah 2:2 (The LORD is about to restore the glory of Israel, as it was before her enemies plundered her.)

Nah 2:3 The enemy soldiers carry red shields and wear uniforms of red. They are preparing to attack! Their chariots flash like fire! Their horses prance!

Nah 2:4 Chariots dash wildly through the streets, rushing back and forth in the city squares. They flash like torches and dart about like lightning.

Nah 2:5 The officers are summoned; they stumble as they press forward. The attackers rush to the wall and set up the shield for the battering ram.

Nah 2:6 The gates by the river burst open; the palace is filled with terror.

Nah 2:7 The queen is taken captive; her servants moan like doves and beat their breasts in sorrow.

Nah 2:8 Like water from a broken dam the people rush from Nineveh! "Stop! Stop!" the cry rings out—but no one turns back.

Nah 2:9 Plunder the silver! Plunder the gold! The city is full of treasure!

Nah 2:10 Nineveh is destroyed, deserted, desolate! Hearts melt with fear; knees tremble, strength is gone; faces grow pale.

Nah 2:11 Where now is the city that was like a den of lions, the place where young lions were fed, where the lion and the lioness would go and their cubs would be safe?

Nah 2:12 The lion killed his prey and tore it to pieces for his mate and her cubs; he filled his den with torn flesh.

Nah 2:13 "I am your enemy!" says the LORD Almighty. "I will burn up your chariots. Your soldiers will be killed in war, and I will take away everything that you took from others. The demands of your envoys will no longer be heard."

## **Nahum 2:1-13**

### **Nahum 2 – Nineveh Conquered**

*"This chapter is a masterpiece of ancient literature, unsurpassed for its graphic portrayal of a military assault."  
(James Montgomery Boice)*

### **A. The battle of Nineveh.**

*1. (1-2) A call to battle.*

**He who scatters has come up before your face.**

**Man the fort!**

**Watch the road!**

**Strengthen *your* flanks!**

**Fortify *your* power mightily.**

**For the LORD will restore the excellence of Jacob**

**Like the excellence of Israel,**

**For the emptiers have emptied them out**

**And ruined their vine branches.**

a. **He who scatters:** Nahum spoke from a vision he saw (Nah 1:1). Now he saw a mighty army coming against the city of Nineveh.

b. **For the LORD will restore the excellence of Jacob:** In this case, part of God's restoration for His people was connected to judgment and destruction on their enemies, those who **have emptied them out and ruined their vine branches**. They would now will face destruction from **he who scatters**.

*2. (3-7) The battle decided*

**The shields of his mighty men *are* made red,**

**The valiant men *are* in scarlet.**

**The chariots *come* with flaming torches**

**In the day of his preparation,**

**And the spears are brandished.**

**The chariots rage in the streets,**

**They jostle one another in the broad roads;**

**They seem like torches,**

**They run like lightning.**

**He remembers his nobles;  
They stumble in their walk;  
They make haste to her walls,  
And the defense is prepared.  
The gates of the rivers are opened,  
And the palace is dissolved.  
It is decreed:  
She shall be led away captive,  
She shall be brought up;  
And her maidservants shall lead *her* as with the voice  
of doves,  
Beating their breasts.**

a. **The chariots come with flaming torches:** Nahum could see it all in his vision. The battle for Nineveh was fierce and bloody, and though **the defense is prepared** they would be conquered.

b. **The chariots rage in the streets, they jostle one another in the broad roads; they seem like torches, they run like lightning:** Chuck Smith noted that some have taken this – erroneously – as a prophecy of the automobile and traffic congestion.

c. **She shall be led away captive:** The prophet not only saw the battle, he also saw the outcome – Nineveh would fall before this mighty army, and she would be humbled and **led away captive** even as the Assyrians led other nations in captivity.

## **B. Nineveh in defeat.**

*1. (8-12) Nineveh brought low and spoiled.*

**Though Nineveh of old was like a pool of water,  
Now they flee away.  
“Halt! Halt!” *they cry*;  
But no one turns back.  
Take spoil of silver!**

**Take spoil of gold!**  
***There is* no end of treasure,**  
**Or wealth of every desirable prize.**  
**She is empty, desolate, and waste!**  
**The heart melts, and the knees shake;**  
**Much pain *is* in every side,**  
**And all their faces are drained of color.**  
**Where *is* the dwelling of the lions,**  
**And the feeding place of the young lions,**  
**Where the lion walked, the lioness *and* lion's cub,**  
**And no one made *them* afraid?**  
**The lion tore in pieces enough for his cubs,**  
**Killed for his lionesses,**  
**Filled his caves with prey,**  
**And his dens with flesh.**

a. **Nineveh of old was like a pool of water:** Nahum said the troops defending Nineveh would be like a pool of water that drains away to no use. They would be useless in defending the city.

i. **Take spoil of silver! Take spoil of gold!** "An impressive confirmation of this prophecy is that nothing of all this gold and silver has been discovered in the ruins of Nineveh by archaeologists. Nineveh was indeed stripped bare" (Boice).

b. **Where is the dwelling of the lions:** The **lion** was one of the national emblems of the Assyrian Empire, and they crushed and plundered other nations like lions destroying prey. Nahum now asked, "**Where is the dwelling of the lions?**" God would bring them low, who once were so mighty.

2. (13) *The LORD vows to conquer Nineveh.*

**"Behold, I *am* against you," says the LORD of hosts,**  
**"I will burn your chariots in smoke, and the sword**  
**shall devour your young lions; I will cut off your prey**



**from the earth, and the voice of your messengers shall be heard no more."**

a. **Behold, I am against you:** What a terrible thing to hear from God! The principle of Rom 8:31 is true for the believer: *If God is for us, who can be against us?* Accordingly, the opposite is also true – if God is **against you**, then who can be for you?

b. **Says the LORD of hosts:** It is bad when God is against you; it is even worse when **the LORD of hosts** is against you. This title refers to God's place as Commander in Chief over all the armies of heaven.

c. **The voice of your messengers shall be heard no more:** Nineveh enjoyed its status as a power-center of the world and gloried the fact that the **voice** of her **messengers** commanded attention in palaces all over the world. That day would come to an end under the judgment of God.

### **Woe to Nineveh**

**Nah 3:1** Doomed is the lying, murderous city, full of wealth to be looted and plundered!

Nah 3:2 Listen! The crack of the whip, the rattle of wheels, the gallop of horses, the jolting of chariots!

Nah 3:3 Cavalry troops charge, swords flash, spears gleam! Corpses are piled high, dead bodies without number—men stumble over them!

Nah 3:4 Nineveh the whore is being punished. Attractive and full of deadly charms, she enchanted nations and enslaved them.

Nah 3:5 The LORD Almighty says, "I will punish you, Nineveh! I will strip you naked and let the nations see you, see you in all your shame.

Nah 3:6 I will treat you with contempt and cover you with filth. People will stare at you in horror.

Nah 3:7 All who see you will shrink back. They will say, 'Nineveh lies in ruins! Who has any sympathy for her? Who will want to comfort her?' "

Nah 3:8 Nineveh, are you any better than Thebes, the capital of Egypt? She too had a river to protect her like a wall—the Nile was her defense.

Nah 3:9 She ruled Ethiopia and Egypt, there was no limit to her power; Libya was her ally.

Nah 3:10 Yet the people of Thebes were carried off into exile. At every street corner their children were beaten to death. Their leading men were carried off in chains and divided among their captors.

Nah 3:11 Nineveh, you too will fall into a drunken stupor! You too will try to escape from your enemies.

Nah 3:12 All your fortresses will be like fig trees with ripe figs: shake the trees, and the fruit falls right into your mouth!

Nah 3:13 Your soldiers are helpless, and your country stands defenseless before your enemies. Fire will destroy the bars across your gates.

Nah 3:14 Draw water to prepare for a siege, and strengthen your fortresses! Trample the clay to make bricks, and get the brick molds ready!

Nah 3:15 No matter what you do, you will still be burned to death or killed in battle. You will be wiped out like crops eaten up by locusts. You multiplied like locusts!

Nah 3:16 You produced more merchants than there are stars in the sky! But now they are gone, like locusts that spread their wings and fly away.

Nah 3:17 Your officials are like a swarm of locusts that stay in the walls on a cold day. But when the sun comes out, they fly away, and no one knows where they have gone!

Nah 3:18 Emperor of Assyria, your governors are dead, and your noblemen are asleep forever! Your people are

scattered on the mountains, and there is no one to bring them home again.

Nah 3:19 There is no remedy for your injuries, and your wounds cannot be healed. All those who hear the news of your destruction clap their hands for joy. Did anyone escape your endless cruelty?

## **Nahum 3:1-19**

### **Nahum 3 – Nineveh, the Wicked City**

#### **A. The sin within Nineveh.**

*1. (1-4) The violence and immorality in Nineveh.*

**Woe to the bloody city!**

**It *is* all full of lies *and* robbery.**

***Its* victim never departs.**

**The noise of a whip**

**And the noise of rattling wheels,**

**Of galloping horses,**

**Of clattering chariots!**

**Horsemen charge with bright sword and glittering spear.**

***There is* a multitude of slain,**

**A great number of bodies, countless corpses–**

**They stumble over the corpses–**

**Because of the multitude of harlotries of the seductive harlot,**

**The mistress of sorceries,**

**Who sells nations through her harlotries,**

**And families through her sorceries.**

- a. **Woe to the bloody city!** In his prophetic vision, Nahum took a tour of the city of Nineveh and observed how ripe it was for judgment. He saw it was a busy city, full of the **noise of a whip and the noise of rattling wheels, of galloping horses, of clattering chariots.** Yet it was busy with violence, deception, and idolatry.

i. Not only were the rulers of Assyria terribly cruel, they *boasted* of their cruelty on monuments that exist in museums to this day. Boice quotes some of the boasts from various monuments:

- "I cut off their heads and formed them into pillars."
- "Bubo, son of Buba, I flayed in the city of Arbela and I spread his skin upon the city wall."
- "I flayed all the chief men who had revolted, and I covered the pillar with their skins."
- "Many within the border of my own land I flayed, and spread their skins upon the walls."
- "I cut off the limbs of the officers, the royal officers who had rebelled."
- "3,000 captives I burned with fire."
- "Their corpses I formed into pillars."
- "From some I cut off their hands and their fingers, and from other I cut off their noses, their ears, and their fingers, of many I put out their eyes."
- "I made one pillar of the living, and another of heads, I bound their heads to posts round about the city."

b. **Who sells the nations through her harlotries:** It was bad enough that Nineveh indulged in this sin for herself; it was worse that she led the **nations** into violence, deception, and idolatry. For this, the judgment of God was coming.

i. "Thousands of tablets uncovered in the Mesopotamian valley show abysmal superstition. Hundreds of sorcery incantations have been brought to light." (Maier, cited in Boice)

2. (5-7) *The wicked city is humbled.*

**"Behold, I *am* against you," says the LORD of hosts;  
"I will lift your skirts over your face  
I will show the nations your nakedness,  
And the kingdoms your shame.  
I will cast abominable filth upon you,  
Make you vile,  
And make you a spectacle.  
It shall come to pass *that* all who look upon you  
Will flee from you, and say,  
'Nineveh is laid waste!  
Who will bemoan her?'  
Where shall I seek comforters for you?"**

a. **I am against you:** Nahum repeated this phrase, first mentioned in Nah 2:13. In the first mention, the emphasis was on the military defeat of Nineveh. Here, the emphasis was on the *humbling* of city.

i. This reminds us the principle of 1Pe 5:5 : *Be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."* Nineveh walked in pride, and as a result had the LORD **against** them. How much better to be humble and receive the grace of God.

b. **I will cast abominable filth upon you, make you vile, and make you a spectacle:** The strength of the word of the LORD almost surprises us here. He will take the idols of Nineveh (**abominable filth**, the Hebrew word *shiqquts* often translated "abomination") and throw them back in their face.

c. **Make you vile:** The idea behind the Hebrew word for **vile** (*nabel*) is that something is made weak, foolish, and contemptible. Nineveh walked high in their pride, but would certainly be brought low – with no one to comfort them (**Where shall I seek comforters for you?**).

i. Again, this was literally fulfilled The ancient Greek historian Diodorus Siculus wrote of the destruction of Nineveh: "So great was the multitude of the slain that the flowing stream, mingled with their blood, changed its color for a considerable distance... They plundered the spoil of the city, a quantity beyond counting" (Boice).

ii. Adam Clarke, writing before the discovery of the ruins in Nineveh in 1840, quotes an author commenting on the disappearance of the city: "What probability was there that the capital city of a great kingdom, a city which was *sixty* miles in compass, a city which contained so many *thousand* inhabitants, a city which had walls a *hundred* feet high... And yet so totally was it destroyed that the place is hardly known where it was situated... Great as it was formerly, so little of it is remaining, that authors are not agreed even about its situation."

## **B. Nineveh is ripe for judgment.**

*1. (8-11) Because of the way God judged other cities, Nineveh is ripe.*

**Are you better than No Amon  
That was situated by the River,  
That had the waters around her,  
Whose rampart was the sea,  
Whose wall was the sea?  
Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength,  
And *it* was boundless;  
Put and Lubim were your helpers.  
Yet she was carried away,  
She went into captivity;  
Her young children also were dashed to pieces  
At the head of every street;  
They cast lots for her honorable men,**

**And all her great men were bound in chains.  
You also will be drunk;  
You will be hidden;  
You also will seek refuge from the enemy.**

a. **Are you better than No Amon:** **No Amon** is the Hebrew name for the Egyptian city of Thebes. Thebes was another wealthy, mighty city that was destroyed completely. The Assyrians in Nineveh knew this well because it was their armies that destroyed Thebes. Nahum said, "Remember what you did to **No Amon**? The same is coming on you."

b. **You also:** We are like the Ninevites. We see empires and nations judged in our own day and in history, just like the Assyrians saw Thebes destroyed. Yet we, like the Ninevites, somehow think that we will be spared, despite our sinful arrogance and rebellion.

*2. (12-15) Because of her own weakness, Nineveh is ripe.*

**All your strongholds *are* fig trees with ripened figs:  
If they are shaken,  
They fall into the mouth of the eater.  
Surely, your people in your midst *are* women!  
The gates of your land are wide open for your enemies;  
Fire shall devour the bars of your *gates*.  
Draw your water for the siege!  
Fortify your strongholds!  
Go into the clay and tread the mortar!  
Make strong the brick kiln!  
There the fire will devour you,  
The sword will cut you off;  
It will eat you up like a locust.  
Make yourself many– like the locust!  
Make yourself many– like the *swarming* locusts!**

a. **Your strongholds are fig trees with ripened figs:**

As easily as ripe fruit falls from a shaken tree, so would the **strongholds** of Nineveh fall before the judgment of God. We often have our **strongholds** of sin and pride that we put great confidence in, but they are ready to be shaken and fall to the ground.

b. **Fire shall devour the bars of your gates:**

Archaeologists document the burning of Nineveh. "The excavators of Nineveh have remarked on the large deposits of ash, which are evidence of a gigantic conflagration" (Boice).

c. **Draw your water for the siege:** Nahum practically mocked the people of Nineveh, cheering them on to do the best they could in light of the coming judgment. They could prepare as many provisions and people they pleased, but it would all come to nothing against the judgment of God.

3. (16-19) *Because her leaders are weak, Nineveh is ripe.*

**You have multiplied your merchants more than the stars of heaven.**

**The locust plunders and flies away.**

**Your commanders *are* like *swarming* locusts,**

**And your generals like great grasshoppers,**

**Which camp in the hedges on a cold day;**

**When the sun rises they flee away,**

**And the place where they *are* is not known.**

**Your shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria;**

**Your nobles rest *in the dust*.**

**Your people are scattered on the mountains,**

**And no one gathers them.**

**Your injury *has* no healing,**

**Your wound is severe.**

**All who hear news of you**

**Will clap *their* hands over you,**



**For upon whom has not your wickedness passed continually?**

a. **Merchants... commanders... generals... shepherds... nobles:** Each of these classes of leaders were numerous in Nineveh, but they would all be ineffective and come to nothing in the day of judgment. Despite their numbers, still **your people are scattered on the mountains, and no one gathers them.** The sinful and rebellious leadership of Nineveh would be powerless against the judgment of God.

b. **All who hear news of you will clap their hands over you:** Nahum ended his prophecy with a view of the righteous and their triumph over the unrighteous. This is something that the people of God need to be often reminded of, because it often goes against present appearances.

i. Because Nineveh was so known – even renowned – for its violence and cruelty, no wonder Nahum sees the nations applauding when the city is judged and destroyed.

ii. In Psalms 73, Asaph dealt with this same problem. It seemed to him that the wicked constantly prospered and lived at ease. It troubled him so much that he doubted his own walk with God, *Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end. Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. Oh, how they are brought to desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors.* (Psa 73:17-19)

iii. For Nahum, Asaph, and for us today, we take comfort in knowing that the judgments of the LORD are faithful and true. We don't need to envy the unrighteous or seek vengeance against them ourselves. Nahum and Asaph each show us that God

is more than able to take care of them and us, each according to His promise.